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## BOOK REVIEWS.

THE MORAL ECONOMY. By Ralph Barton Perry. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909. Pp. xvi, 267.

The purpose of this clearly written and attractively printed book is, in the author's words, "to study morality directly, to derive its conception and laws from an analysis of life." The author believes that theoretical ethics "is seriously embarrassed by its present emphasis on the history and criticism of doctrines, by its failure to resort to experience where without more ado it may solve problems on their merits." And in the second place the author hopes to "connect ethical theory with everyday reflection on practical matters." It is in harmony with the above purposes that with the exception of Plato and Aristotle the classical ethical writers are scarcely mentioned. Kant and Spinoza appear in the index once each; Adam Smith, Mill, Spencer, and Green not at all. Instead are frequent references to Nietzsche, Matthew Arnold, and Chesterton.

The title suggests the standpoint from which the moral experience is to be viewed,—that of an "economy," an ordered system, a community of interests. Goodness, the first topic, is treated under the heading: "Morality as the Organization of Life." "Morality is the massing of interests against a reluctant cosmos." "The fulfillment of an organization of interests is morally good." "Morality is natural if life is natural . . . It is related to life as a later to an earlier phase of one development. The organization of life answers the self-preservative impulse with which life begins; the deliberate fulfillment of a human purpose is only life grown strong enough through organization to conduct a larger, more adventurous enterprise." War between man and man is an obsolescent form of heroism, but there is one campaign in which all interests are engaged; "the war of life upon the routine of the mechanical cosmos and its forces of dissolution."

Duty is treated under "The Logic of the Moral Appeal." Following the general idea, the aim is to show that a progressive adoption of new interests marks the ascending path of morality on from 'prudence' through 'preference,' 'impartiality, and jus-

tice,' to 'good will,'—the determination of action with reference to all affected interests. Obviously the two crucial steps are from prudence to the adoption of new, 'higher' interests which do not now appeal to me, and from 'my' interests to those of 'others.' The logic of the first,—the preference for higher interests,—Professor Perry finds in the conception of 'higher' as being the more liberal or comprehensive. The "quantitative basis of preference" is the only rational justification. But the way is cleared for this by the "principle of the objective validity of interests,"—that an interest is none the less an interest because it does not coincide with an individual's momentary inclination. For the second step, the reason why we should treat every other person as "end, not as means only" is found in the implication of all reasoning or discourse. If you are willing to reason with one about it, you really grant the point. For in any discussion if both parties claim candidly to represent the truth, they are in so far equal. "Neither can do more than appeal to the object. Neither has any authority; there is no authority in matters of truth, but only evidence." "Discussion involves mutual respect in which each party acknowledges the finality of the other as a vehicle of truth" (pp. 65, 66).

The logic of the first of the above appeals does not appear to the present writer to escape the difficulty with which Plato struggled in proving the reasonableness of goodness. For it is open to grave doubt whether we can say that the 'higher' can be reduced to 'more,' or that the great moral decisions can be justified by a mathematical reason. To the 'philosopher' or 'the expert' his choice seems 'reasonable'; to the man who has adopted the new interest it may appear more comprehensive. But to the man who has not yet adopted the new interest, it may not appear that 'width of representation' is coincident with 'weight of incentive,' or is worth the sacrifice of intense and vivid interests already present. For him in short, it is a 'synthetic proposition.' It is 'reasonable' only if we define reason in terms of faith. Professor Perry's suggestion for the logic of the second step really implies a synthetic conception. I shall recognize the interests of another if I am already minded to recognize him as belonging to the same social world of truth seekers with myself. That is, we get a 'reason' for a social act because we start with a social system and proceed to analyze its implications. Carrying this suggestion of method back into

the preceding case of adopting new interests, is it not probable that we can get a reasonable ground for the appeal of the new only when we postulate a self of forward reaching imagination and creative power to 'take an interest'? This active, creative, compelling aspect of the moral self, which in crises becomes a 'categorical imperative,' does not in my judgment get sufficient recognition in the author's treatment. The 'organization of interests' interprets more readily the reflections of a 'cool hour' than the sterner moments of duty when some son of man sets his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem.

Chapters follow on The Order of Virtue, The Moral Test of Progress, The Moral Criticism of Fine Art, and The Moral Justification of Religion, which we cannot take space to analyze in detail. Of the many fine and true things well said we would call attention especially to the characterization of the radical (p. 147), to the interpretation and defense of democracy (pp. 163 ff.), to the definition of the moral values and limitations of art, (Chap. V, *passim*), and to the brief presentation of moral idealism (pp. 249-251).

In considering an attempt to read the moral experience anew and directly, we inevitably compare it with other interpretations. Most of the classical versions have been evoked by some new social or individual problems, or perhaps a general method is carried into this specific field. Historical criticism shows the relevancy of their interpretations and at the same time their limitations. Probably most who should attempt to read the moral experience of to-day, searching for what is most distinctive and original, would fix upon the economic and industrial phases of justice, the conflicting interests of social classes, the individualism in family life, the control of politics by economic interests, the ideals of imperialism, the efficiency of science in protecting and rendering happier human life. In the present work the influence of science is reflected in the view of morality as the "massing of interests against a reluctant cosmos." And perhaps it is commercial life that suggests the conception of economy as a community of interests. But we certainly breathe on the whole the atmosphere of letters and art rather than that of industry, trade, or politics. The argument is addressed, it would seem, to the youth who is in the university rather than to the statesman or the man of affairs, not to say the trade unionist. The moral experience analyzed is prevailingly that

of the man of culture, looking with sympathetic eye upon the progress of democracy; it is hardly that of those engaged most intimately in the struggles.

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L'IDÉAL MODERNE. La question morale. La question sociale. La question religieuse. Par Paul Gaultier. Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1908. Pp. 358.

It is generally admitted by Frenchmen that their country is morally in a pretty 'bad way.' Occasionally this is vigorously denied, as President Jordan can testify; but the most vigorous denial does not change the facts. What the French themselves think of the conditions can be best learned from a perusal of the books and the numerous periodicals that have appeared within the last two decades dealing with the general problem of public morality. Professor Fouillée in his "Psychologie du peuple français" admits that his country has been rapidly losing prestige, but he finds some consolation in the circumstance that the decreasing birth-rate to which attention has so often been called, is not confined to France. M. Gaultier tells his readers that whether we rejoice or grieve, the fact is patent that the contemporary conscience is rapidly losing its moorings and that morality in conduct is becoming a thing of the past. Hence there has come into existence an abundant literature the aim of which is to establish a system of morals outside of metaphysics and of every creed. He asks what we are to think of these efforts. Is it possible to establish a system of morals without God and without a revelation? How can biology explain the duty of self-sacrifice, which has influenced and continues to influence the actions of many men? He does not believe with the sociologists that an act is criminal because it hurts the social conscience, but that it hurts the social conscience because it is criminal. There is some truth in the contention of the sociologists, but it is not the whole truth. It is the mission of history to explain; it cannot discover motives except in so far as they are expressed in acts. Morality cannot be interpreted by a study of the social group alone, independent of the personal, the psychic, and, consequently, the rational factor. Mo-